



[Israel Uses Three-Decades-Old Claims That Iran is a Few Days Away from Acquiring a Nuclear Bomb to Justify War on Iran](#)

As the troubling conflict between Israel and Iran intensifies, it is worth examining the major factors that have propelled the outbreak of this. One of these is undoubtedly the longstanding Israeli claims about the state of Iran's nuclear program, which has dangerously been used to try and warrant aggression for years. Since the mid-1990s, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly alleged that Iran is on the verge of a nuclear weapon – something that has proven to be untrue time and time again. On numerous occasions, he has painted a picture of a situation in which Iran is “extremely close” to attaining a weapon, only for these timeframes to come and go without the dire fearmongering predictions materializing. Official assessments from U.S. intelligence agencies and others over the preceding years have consistently found that Iran has not been actively pursuing a weapon. Similarly, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) – the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog organization – has stated that it has found no evidence of Iranian nuclear weapons production. Even Israeli assessments have been at odds with frequent politician statements, as Mossad summaries have relayed that an Iranian nuclear weapon is in fact not imminent, and that military action against the country is what could actually end up spurring the development of a weapon.

Analysts who argue that the aforementioned Israeli rhetoric regarding Iran is aimed at provoking conflict and seeking to drag the United States into unnecessary wars point to how Israeli officials like Netanyahu have done so previously in other instances. Back in 2002, Netanyahu addressed U.S. Congress and spoke in support of an American invasion of Iraq. He predicted that “If you take out Saddam’s regime, I guarantee you that it will have enormous positive reverberations on the region.” Of course, the Iraq War ultimately proved to be a catastrophic disaster which paved the way for massive instability and destruction in the region. Now, with what has been unfolding between Israel and Iran, and the risk of harmful U.S. entanglement in the conflict, commentators cannot help but draw a parallel to what took place regarding Iraq in the early 2000s – with some labeling it the Iraq War 2.0. In both cases, falsehoods have been put forth about nonexistent weapons of mass destruction, and in the latest instance with Iran, government officials had even recently been engaged in multiple rounds of talks with the United States aimed at reaching a new nuclear deal before the unprovoked Israeli attack.

Diplomacy had already proved to be effective in the past. When an emphasis was placed on this rather than reckless belligerence, the efforts to address Iran’s nuclear program culminated in the landmark Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), more commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, in July of 2015. The agreement had widespread international backing and placed significant restrictions on Iran’s nuclear activities by establishing global monitoring and verification measures, in exchange for sanctions relief. Under the stipulations of the deal, Iran committed to significantly reducing the number of centrifuges it operates and limiting uranium enrichment levels to those that are suitable for civilian use, but not weapons-grade. It also agreed to enhanced monitoring and verification that would allow inspectors from the IAEA access to its nuclear facilities to ensure compliance with the agreement. In exchange, Iran received relief from international sanctions that allowed it to regain access to some of its frozen assets and reconnect with the global financial system.

Experts have outlined that Iran largely adhered to the JCPOA until the United States withdrew from the agreement in May of 2018, something that was consistently verified by the IAEA. Prior to this, Iran was generally seen as complying with the deal's limitations on its nuclear activities and only began to gradually step back from its commitments after the U.S. withdrawal. Thus, many observers contend that the primary reason Iranian nuclear activities have moved forward in recent years is because of the U.S. withdrawal, with Iran seemingly using nuclear advancements as a bargaining tool to try and push for a new deal. As has been outlined as well, the U.S.-Iran nuclear talks that had been ongoing before Israel's attack on Iran are the only legitimate and sustainable means of addressing Iran's nuclear program while also safeguarding American national security interests in the Middle East. Principled U.S. officials have stressed that there is a great weariness among the American public regarding the United States' potential entanglement in another "forever war." This is precisely why a majority of Americans support negotiations with Iran rather than military action. Yet now, escalations in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran gravely risk dragging in the United States.